

Mirrors & Mornings

Mornings can be the hardest part.

The house is quiet. The day has not started asking anything of you yet. And there, waiting in the bathroom light, is the mirror.

For many women living with alopecia, the mirror becomes a place of negotiation. You look, then look away. You tilt your head to a familiar angle. You check the part, the edges, the crown. You measure today against yesterday, searching for a difference you hope is not there.

Some mornings, you find peace. Other mornings, you find grief before you have even had your coffee.

If your mornings have become heavy, you are not being dramatic. You are simply human, and you are carrying something real.

The mirror is not only glass. It holds memory. It remembers the styles you loved, the way your hair moved, the confidence you once borrowed from a good hair day. When your reflection changes, it can feel as though you are being introduced to a stranger who is wearing your face.

But a stranger is only someone you have not spent time with yet.

You are allowed to take that time.

You do not have to love your reflection immediately. You do not have to force gratitude before your heart is ready. Healing rarely arrives as a sudden revelation. More often, it arrives as a habit — small, repeated, and quiet.

Begin with one gentle sentence.

Not a performance. Not an affirmation you do not believe yet. Just something honest and kind.

“Good morning.”

“I am here.”

“I am doing my best today.”

Speak to yourself the way you would speak to a woman you love. You would not stand beside your daughter, your sister, or your dearest friend and list everything the mirror took from her. You would remind her who she still is.

Offer yourself that same mercy.

Your morning routine can become a place of care instead of criticism. Let it be slow when it can be. Let the water be warm. Let the oils and creams feel like tenderness rather than repair. Let getting ready become an act of devotion to yourself, not an apology for your appearance.

Some mornings you may reach for a wig, and it may feel like a crown.

Some mornings you may reach for a scarf, and it may feel like softness.

Some mornings you may leave your head bare, and it may feel like freedom.

All of it belongs to you. None of it requires an explanation.

There will be days when you get dressed and still feel unsure. Go anyway. Confidence is not a feeling you must have before you leave the house. Very often, it is something you build by living your life while you are still afraid.

And when the mirror is unkind, remember that it can only show you a surface. It cannot show the way you comfort a friend, the patience you offer a child, the work you do, the prayers you say, the laughter you bring into a room. It cannot show your endurance. It cannot show your heart.

A mirror shows a moment. It never shows a life.

On the difficult mornings, shorten the distance between waking and being gentle with yourself. Change what you can. Move the mirror. Soften the light. Play music that makes your shoulders drop. Step outside and let the morning air remind you that the world is still waiting for you, exactly as you are.

And on the mornings when something in you feels strong, notice it. Let yourself feel it fully. Those mornings are not accidents. They are evidence of the healing you have been quietly building.

You are not behind. You are not failing at acceptance. You are learning a new way of seeing, and learning always takes more than one morning.

One day, you will pass a mirror without bracing yourself. You will catch your own eyes and something in you will settle. It may not happen tomorrow. But it will happen, more often than you expect, and then more often than that.

Until then, keep greeting yourself.

Keep choosing softness when the world offers sharpness.

Keep showing up for the woman in the glass. She has been waiting for you to be on her side.

She is not asking for perfection.

She is only asking to be met with love.

AFFIRMATION

“I meet my reflection with kindness. My morning does not decide my worth, and my mirror does not hold my value. I am allowed to take my time. I am allowed to feel beautiful in whatever way is true for me today. I greet myself gently, and I begin again.”

— Leigh Rose